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STATE DEPT FOR WHA/CCA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/03/2016

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [SOCI](#) [CU](#)

SUBJECT: CUBAN GOVERNMENT TARGETS OPPOSITION YOUTH LEADERS

Classified By: COM Michael Parmly for Reason 1.4(d).

¶1. (C) Summary: The Cuban Government briefly detained opposition youth leader Edgard Lopez Moreno and two other dissidents on November 2 after they visited a USINT internet center. Police seized materials from Lopez and the others and warned them to halt their dissident activities. The detentions came two days after the GOC organized an intense "act of repudiation" against another opposition youth figure. The leader of a third opposition youth group has been incommunicado for four days since failing to attend a USINT-organized meeting. The GOC's increasing pressure on opposition youth-group leaders reveals a vulnerability for the regime. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Marti Youth Coalition chief Edgard Lopez Moreno and two other dissidents, Roberto Santana and Luis Enrique Rodriguez, were detained for more than two hours on November 2 after visiting a USINT internet center. Lopez, whose organization is one of three key opposition youth groups exploring ways to join forces, told us that police took him, Santana and Rodriguez to a police station near USINT and confiscated their belongings, including documents and two short-wave radios. Lopez, 29, said police pointed out that he had a beautiful blonde daughter and that he should be careful.

¶3. (C) Another opposition-youth leader, Ahmed Rodriguez Albacia of Young People Without Censorship, was subjected to an intense "act of repudiation" in Holguin on October 31. Rodriguez's mother told us her son went to Holguin to visit his grandmother but was surrounded by approximately 100 communist militants who seized his money (more than 100 USD) and forced him to leave the city. The following day, elsewhere in Holguin province, Rodriguez was subjected to another act of repudiation, his mother said. Meanwhile, the chief of a third opposition youth group, Nestor Rodriguez Lobaina of the Cuban Youth Movement for Democracy, was incommunicado after failing to appear for an important dissident-youth meeting on October 31. Attempts to contact him were unsuccessful.

COMMENT

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¶4. (C) The Cuban Government's increasing pressure on opposition youth-group leaders reveals a vulnerability for the regime, and shows the GOC's keen interest in preventing the emergence of a unified youth-dissident front. Despite detentions and the deployment of rent-a-thugs, dissident youth-group leaders are strongly enthusiastic about working together to push for common objectives, such as the liberation of all political prisoners. USINT has seen strong turnout at recent youth-group meetings. We are helping the

groups in a variety of ways, and will report further as their plans evolve.  
PARMLY